

Hardy Hydroelectric Plant,
Dormitory
6928 East 36th Street
Newaygo Vicinity
Newaygo County
Michigan

HAER No. MI-100-G

HAER
MICH
62-NEWAY,
IG-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Great Lakes Systems Office
1709 Jackson Street
Omaha, Nebraska 68102-2571

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HARDY HYDROELECTRIC PLANT, Dormitory

HAER No. MI-100-G

HAER
MICH
62-NEWA.V,
1G-

Location: 6928 East 36th Street
Newaygo Vicinity
Newaygo County
Michigan

UTM: 16:610190:4815600
Quad: Croton

Dates of
Construction: 1930-1931

Engineers: Edward M. Burd, head of civil and hydraulic engineering for
Consumers Power Company, Jackson, Michigan

Present
Owner: Consumers Energy Company (formerly Consumers Power Company),
Jackson, Michigan

Present Use: Storage building at hydroelectric generating plant

Significance: The Dormitory is part of the Hardy Hydroelectric Plant, built in the early 1930s as a link in Consumers Power Company's system of electric power generation. In designing and building Hardy, the company found a way to erect a stable, relatively high dam on Michigan's notoriously gravelly foundations, continuing its tradition of developing solutions to the problems presented by Michigan's geography and geology. The design process for the dam also appears to reflect a tendency in American civil engineering to favor regional practices over technology developed elsewhere.

Project

Information: This documentation was prepared by Consumers Power Company (CPCo) in conformance with its Cultural Resources Management Plan for the Muskegon River Hydroelectric Projects (July 1995). The plan stipulated the recordation of the entire Hardy Hydroelectric Plant (according to the standards of the Historic American Engineering Record). The documentation was completed in 1997 by Hess, Roise and Company of Minneapolis under contract with CPCo. Cynthia de Miranda served as Project Historian under the supervision of Principal Investigator Jeffrey A. Hess. Project photography was completed under a subcontract with Hess Roise by Clayton B. Fraser of Loveland, Colorado.

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

The two-story Dormitory stands on concrete piles on the downstream toe of the Embankment (HAER No. MI-100-A) of the Hardy Hydroelectric Plant (HAER No. MI-100). A veneer of brown brick sheathes the timber-framed building. On its east side, two rectangular window frames with concrete sills and soldier-course lintels flank a single-leaf personnel door; all three ground-floor openings were infilled with plywood at an undetermined date to prevent vandalism. Above are three six-over-six double-hung windows with wood sash and concrete sills. The north and south facades are identical to each other, displaying first- and second-story rows of four windows each. All ground floor windows have soldier-course lintels and concrete sills and have been infilled with brick or plywood. Second-story window glazing and detailing also matches that of the east facade. On the west facade, a double-leaf wood cargo door opens to a ground-level concrete-slab loading platform. Two windows punctuate the second story.¹

Above the second-story windows, soldier-course lintels merge with a similarly detailed beltcourse that circles the building just below a corbelled cornice. Composition shingle covers the hipped roof, and a brick chimney stack emerges from the center of the downstream-facing (south) facade.

The lower floor is a largely open-plan storage area with a 9'-7" x 11'-3" tool room in the southeast corner. Four dormitory rooms, a lounge, and a bathroom occupy the upper floor. Stairs to the second story are at the east end of the building.

¹ Although the dormitory is actually aligned on a northwest-southeast axis, full cardinal points are used in descriptions for the sake of clarity. This description is based on a site survey completed by the authors on 24 July 1995 and on engineering drawings obtained from Consumers Power Company. See Allied Engineers, "Floor Plan, Section & Details: Hardy Dormitory and Storeroom," Drawing No. M164-F1312, 10 March 1931, Bridge Street file storage, Consumers Power Company, Jackson, Michigan.

HISTORY

When Hardy Hydroelectric Plant (HAER No. MI-100) was designed in the late 1920s, the site was still rather isolated from villages or towns. Unimproved roads in the area made travelling to the dam, especially in winter, time-consuming and difficult. The Dormitory was included at the Hardy Plant to provide on-site accommodations for repair crews. Plant operators dwelled in on-site pre-fabricated single-family homes (since removed). The Dormitory, part of the original plan for the power plant complex, was probably erected in late 1930 or early 1931. Historic views indicate that the structure was complete by July 1931.²

Roads in the vicinity of the Hardy Hydroelectric Plant have been improved since the plant was built, and the site is no longer considered remote. As Hardy became more accessible, repair crews could commute to the dam and the lodgings on the second floor became obsolete. The entire building is now used as storage space.

² See photo no 1161.-300, 7-8-31, "Power House East Side" in the collection of construction photographs maintained at the site.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

HISTORIC VIEWS

Hardy Hydroelectric Plant construction photographs. Hardy Hydroelectric Plant, Muskegon River, Michigan.

ENGINEERING DRAWINGS

Allied Engineers, Inc. "General Plan: Hardy Development." Drawing No. M164-F1272, 11 November 1930. Hydro Operations, Consumers Power Company, Cadillac, Michigan.

_____. "Floor Plan, Section & Details: Hardy Dormitory and Storeroom." Drawing No. M164-F1312, 10 March 1931. Bridge Street file storage, Consumers Power Company, Jackson, Michigan.